

Building ‘The Biggest Dam Project on Earth’

The People Who Built Oroville Dam

The Oroville Dam was built by the hard work of many individuals in often rough and difficult conditions and was known at the time of its construction as “The Biggest Dam Project on Earth.” One man, Albert Jones, remembers “the absolute coldness. The wind whipped in there (the spillway) all the time. It was bone-chilling cold. Looking back, though, it was quite a thrill to be a part of it all” (Oroville Mercury-Register). Another builder, Vern Reinhardt, involved with the building of the railroad for the dam project recalled, “We worked long hours- six days a week on the railroad and the seventh day maintaining our equipment, it was hard work, but I liked it- enjoyed it” (Oroville Mercury-Register). At the peak of construction, there were roughly 3000 people working on the project and from 1957-1968, a total of some 5000 people had contributed to the building of the dam.

The workers came from all over the United States to build this project over the Feather River: New York, Florida, Missouri, Arkansas, and some came from as close as Oroville itself. The construction workers who came from afar were

called “boomers” and were those workers who traveled around the country, following one d a m construction project to the next. It was a way of life for some of the workers. Some of them came with trailers; others rented or bought homes in Oroville. DWR built a community of houses for the State workers, which still stands today.



‘In Memory.’ Photo Credit: Jeff Shaner

A few years ago, one of the builders, and an Oroville resident since 1946, Stu Shaner founded a club called “Men Who Built Oroville Dam.” In an effort to keep the history of the dam alive, the club spearheaded an effort to build a monument dedicated to all those, both living and dead, who helped construct the massive project. The club is close to 200 members strong. DWR allowed the organization to build the 7-foot high monument on the top of the dam. Dedicated in May of 2001, the monument includes a bronze plaque inscribed with the names of the 34 men who died working on the dam and related projects.

The Lake Oroville Visitors Center has exhibits focusing on early water development in California, the construction of the Oroville Dam and the State Water Project. Admission is free. For more information, call (530) 538-2219.

Oroville Dam and Reservoir Statistics

Gross Capacity	3,537,580 acre-feet
Surface Area	15,810 acres
Shoreline	167 miles
Surface Elevation	899 feet

Welcome!

Welcome to the third issue of the Oroville Facilities Relicensing Newsletter. Please join us in participating in the relicensing of the Oroville Facilities (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Project No. 2100). This newsletter is one of the key communication tools to help keep you informed during relicensing. Public participation in this process is critical, therefore your comments and input are not only welcome, but encouraged.

GET ON THE LIST!

The Newsletter is a free publication. If you’d like to be added to our mailing list, please contact us via e-mail or phone.



Toll-free number: 1-866-820-8198



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STAY INFORMED!



Visit the project web site at <http://OrovilleRelicensing.water.ca.gov> to find continually updated information including relevant documents, a calendar of upcoming meetings, and summaries of past meetings.

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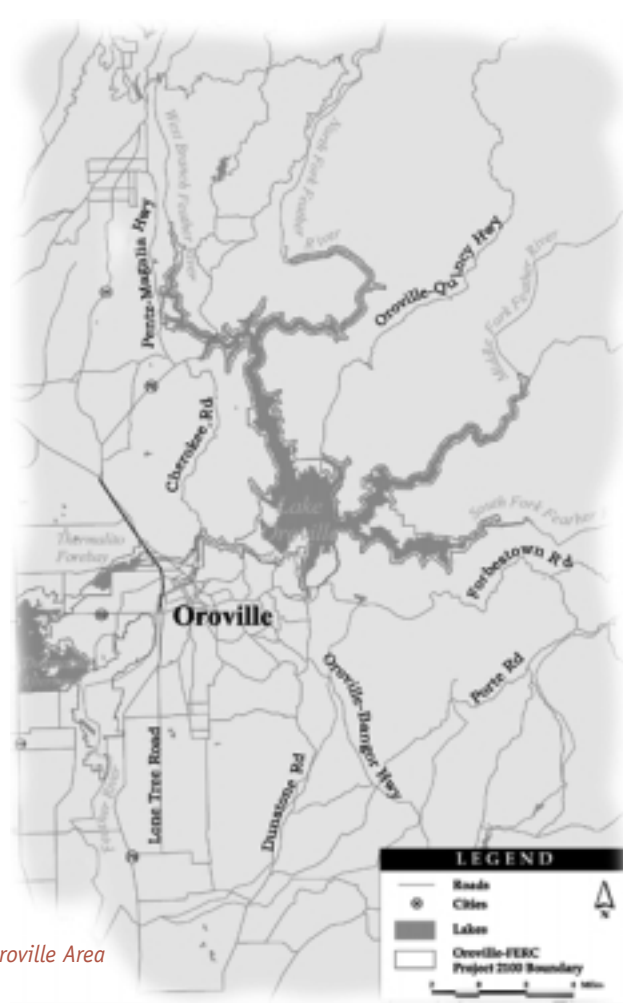
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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

Map of the Oroville Area



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DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

OROVILLE FACILITIES RELICENSING

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Project No. 2100

Newsletter

Vol. 3, February 2002

Another Step Forward in the Relicensing Process

In just over one year the Oroville Facilities Relicensing Collaborative participants have made a great deal of progress. The Plenary Group and five resource-specific work groups were formed, a full range of relicensing issues were identified, NEPA/CEQA scoping was initiated, and a preliminary draft Study Plan package was developed. What a year!

The Scoping Meetings

The Alternative Licensing Procedures for the Oroville Facilities offers interested parties formal comment opportunities on Scoping Document 1 (SD1). SD1 presents information about the Oroville Facilities and identifies resource issues. SD1 also describes how interested parties can participate in the relicensing process and identifies scoping and relicensing activities, including meeting dates and the date comments are due.

Scoping meetings, hosted by DWR, offered comment



The Preliminary Draft Study Plan Package

The Collaborative Work Groups achieved a significant milestone on December 11, 2001 when they presented the preliminary draft Study Plan package (the “package”) to the Plenary Group. Developed with the help of stakeholders, the package contains 72 proposed Study Plans to gather the information needed to support a new license. The Study Plans fall under five resource categories: 1) land use, land management, and aesthetics; 2) recreation and socioeconomics; 3) cultural resources; 4) engineering and operations; and 5) environmental. The package includes Study

Plan abstracts, preliminary draft Study Plans that the Work Groups developed, a study coordination matrix, a list of critical path studies, and an issue tracker.

The goals of the Study Plan review process from December 2001 to March/April 2002 are to obtain a consensus-supported Study Plan package by March 2002, ensure that critical path studies are reviewed, revised, and approved so work can begin in Spring 2002, and finalize Scoping Document 1.

Anyone interested in receiving a copy of the Study Plan package should contact Sue Larsen at DWR, (916) 653-7322.

IN THIS ISSUE ...

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD	1
RELICENSING TERMS	2
DID YOU KNOW?	2
INTERIM RECREATION PROJECTS	3
BUILDING ‘THE BIGGEST DAM PROJECT ON EARTH’	5

Continued on page 4

Relicensing Terms

FPA: Federal Power Act – Passed by Congress in 1935, the Federal Power Act is the key law governing nonfederal hydropower and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Subsequent statutes include the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act, the Electric Consumers Protection Act, and the Energy Policy Act. There are four sections of the FPA in particular that affect hydro relicensing: sections 4(e), 10(a), 10(j), and 18.

• Section 4(e) issues mandatory conditioning authority to federal land management agencies for the public use of project land within federal jurisdiction.

• Section 10(a) requires FERC to give equal consideration to power and non-power values to provide the “best public use of the waterway.”

• Section 10(j) requires that FERC include state and federal fish and wildlife agencies’ conditions in a new license, unless they are inconsistent with the requirements of the FPA.

• Section 18 requires FERC to mandate fishway construction, if the US Fish & Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service so prescribe.

PM&E: Protection, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures – The acronym “PM&E” is used to collectively define measures considered to address resource issues in relicensing. Protection measures are typically defined as those that are put in place to ensure an existing resource is not diminished by the continued operation of the project. PM&E measures are terms and conditions that may be placed in a license to lessen the potential adverse impacts on a resource associated

with a hydro project. PM&E measures may also increase the value or effectiveness of a resource beyond the level that exists at the time of application.

Stakeholders – Stakeholders are individuals or groups who are interested in a proposed action because of ownership, statutory responsibility, or because the proposed action could directly or indirectly affect their interests. Stakeholders in hydro relicensings typically include the licensee, FERC staff, State and federal resource agencies, affected Native American Tribes, local governments, businesses, landowners, conservation groups, recreation organizations, and the general public.

(Note: definitions are derived from the EPRI Hydro Relicensing Forum)

Did You Know?

• The Feather River Hatchery can accommodate 9000 adult salmon and 2000 adult steelhead! The incubator can hold 20 million eggs and 9.6 million fingerlings can be reared in the 8 concrete raceways.

• Lake Oroville has been rated as one of the best bass fishing spots in California.

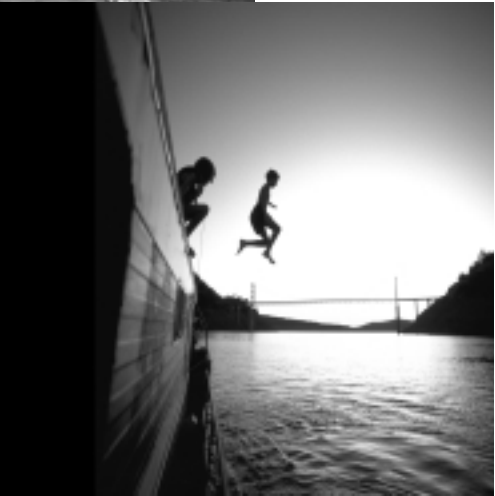
• Reserved for non-motorized use only, the Thermalito North Forebay is ranked as the best sailing and windsurfing spot north of the San Francisco Bay Area.

INTERIM RECREATION PROJECTS

The California Department of Water Resources is pleased to announce plans to move forward with interim recreation projects associated with the Oroville Facilities. Starting soon, we will begin to see changes in the Oroville area, including renovation of some existing recreation facilities and the construction of new ones.

“We’re grateful for the volunteer work so many members of the Oroville community have put into the relicensing effort and in shaping the package of interim recreation projects,” said Rick Ramirez, DWR’s Program Manager for the Oroville Facilities Relicensing.

A hard-working task force formed by the Oroville Relicensing collaborative’s Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group that included broad representation from the local community, recreation groups, State and local resource agencies, State Water Contractors, and DWR developed the Proposed Interim Recreation Projects list for DWR consideration. The task force first developed a simple screening criteria to identify which of over 200 suggested potential projects could be undertaken prior to license application without significant environmental review or amendment to the current FERC project license. Project descriptions were developed and an expanded screening process resulted in a matrix that assigned scores to each potential project based on participants’ scoring to over 15 separate evaluation criteria.



The Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group then approved the list for submittal to the Plenary Group, which approved it for submittal to DWR at their December 11, 2001 meeting. Now that the process is complete, DWR can

begin implementation on selected projects. They are called “Interim” because instead of waiting until 2007, when a new license is expected, DWR has decided to begin designing and implementing some of the projects from this list well in advance: DWR expects to begin work

on many of the enhancements as early as 2002. Ranging from promotion of existing facilities to construction of new features, the interim recreation projects will benefit both residents and visitors to the

Oroville area. Interim projects that are implemented may be included as pre-filing enhancements in the recreation plan that will accompany the license application.

“I would like to thank those members of the community who participated in developing these interim recreation enhancement projects,” said Ramirez. “Community involvement is key to the success of these projects.”

Another Step Forward in the Relicensing Process, Continued from page 1

Timetable for integrating SD1, Issue Sheets, and Study Plans

September 2001

- SD1 comment period begins

October 2001

- NEPA/CEQA scoping meetings

November 2001

- SD1 comment period ends

December 2001- March 2002

- Preliminary draft Study Plans developed. Revisions, as appropriate, to Study Plans and SD1 to reflect results of scoping process

March/April 2002

- Distribution of SD1 with Study Plans

A total of 23 written comments were received from six State and federal Agencies, nine Water Contractors and Water Agencies, and eight Stakeholder groups (see below). In addition, members of the public offered verbal comments as well. A court reporter recorded the meetings so that all verbal and written statements submitted would become part of the formal public record for the Oroville Facilities Relicensing process.

Written Comments on Scoping Document 1 were received from the following groups

Water Contractors and Water Agencies

State Water Contractors
Kern County Water Agency
Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
Castaic Lake Water Agency
Metropolitan Water District of California
Santa Clara Valley Water District
Joint Water Districts
Western Canal Water District
Feather River Diverters

State and Federal Agencies

Plumas National Forest
National Park Service
California Department of Fish and Game
Electricity Oversight Board
State Water Resources Control Board
National Marine Fisheries Service

Stakeholder Groups

California Business Properties Association
California Chamber of Commerce
Association of California Water Agencies
F.D. Pursell
Oroville Foundation of Flight
Southern California Water Committee
PaleoResource Consultants
California Independent System Operator

It’s Official! DWR Files Notice of Intent with FERC

The Department of Water Resources of the State of California filed a Notice of Intent on January 9, 2002 with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to file an application for a new license for the Oroville Dam, State Water Facilities (Project No. 2100) on or before January 31, 2005. This represents a significant step in the Oroville Facilities Relicensing process. The application for a new license will include a Draft Environmental Assessment prepared by the Department of Water Resources. The current license expires January 31, 2007.

The Notice of Intent includes a description of the project works, the installed plant capacity, and specifies that the new license will be for a power license. The Notice also lists cities and towns, federally-recognized Native American tribes, irrigation and drainage districts, and political subdivisions in the general area of the project or likely to be interested in, or affected by, the notification.

Oroville Facilities Relicensing Schedule

